

CHAPTER 30**OFFICER OF THE WATCH**

(MOD *Sponsor*: NCHQ-ACOS(W))

This chapter has been diversity and inclusion impact assessed by the sponsor in accordance with Departmental policy. No direct discrimination or adverse impact was identified. This chapter is due for review at the next routine amendment exercise.

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CHAPTER 30

OFFICER OF THE WATCH

SECTION I - OFFICER OF THE WATCH

3001. Purpose and Accountability

1. The primary purpose of the OOW at sea and in harbour is to ensure, as the Commanding Officer's representative, the safety of the ship in all its aspects, but especially from risk of collision and grounding at sea.

2. The OOW is accountable to the Commanding Officer for the safety of the ship in all its aspects. They retain charge of the ship as described in **0803**. Such charge shall not be given up unless so directed by the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer or, in certain circumstances, the Navigating Officer. (See **0803.3**.) Charge of the ship is to be turned over formally between OOWs, i.e. 'You/I have the ship'.

3. The relationship between the OOW and Navigating Officer is described in **1923–1925**. Whether or not the Navigating Officer has taken the execution of the navigation the OOW never loses their overall accountability for the safety of the ship. They therefore retain the duty to keep themselves informed of the position of the ship and navigation hazards at all times.

4. If the Navigating Officer wishes to pilot the ship by giving conning orders directly to the Quartermaster, they must make arrangements to become the OOW. The former OOW then becomes their assistant and deals with matters of internal safety, supervision of the routine and ceremonial as set out in Captain's Standing Orders; they should continue to keep a vigilant lookout.

3002. Tasks

1. **Supervision of the Watch.** They are to see that the watch are constantly at their posts and alert and attentive to their duties. They are to take pains to instruct them in their respective duties, pointing out any mistakes that may have been made and how mistakes should be avoided in future.

2. **Night Rounds.** During the night they are to be careful that rounds are carried out as laid down in ship's orders and that every part of the ship is visited to see that there are no irregularities or any signs of fire or flooding, and they are to see that the results of such rounds are reported to them.

3. **Safes.** When the Officer of the Watch is required to hold money, railway warrants, or other material or documents requiring secure stowage, the Senior Watchkeeper is to assume full responsibility. They are to make out a muster book listing all the contents of the safe. In turning over the watch, the new Officer of the Watch is to muster all the contents of the safe and sign the muster book. It is this signature which transfers responsibility from the Senior Watchkeeper. The Commanding Officer is to sign the Officer of the Watch's safe muster book weekly.

4. **Ship's Log.** The Officer of the Watch is to see that the Ship's Log is written up correctly and that all entries required by the instructions printed inside the cover of the log (see also BRd 0045(4) *Admiralty Manual of Navigation – Conduct of Ships at Sea*) are duly made. At the end of their watch they are to initial the log as proof that all necessary entries have been made and are correct.

5. **Machinery Exhausts.** They are responsible for ensuring that personnel are not employed aloft in the vicinity of machinery exhausts until the Marine Engineering Officer has confirmed that orders have been given to guard against venting in the vicinity of the work.

6. **Watertight and Citadel Integrity.** They are at all times responsible for ordering and controlling the correct CBRNDC state of readiness and condition. In the event of flooding or damage they are immediately to order 'Close all red openings'. Control of the state and condition orders may be exercised through the officer or rating in charge of CBRNDC HQ when this is manned. This officer or rating is then to keep the Officer of the Watch informed of the extent of any flooding, damage or other hazard.

7. **Radio Hazards.** The Officer of the Watch is to ensure that the necessary safety measures laid down in ship's orders have been taken and during the restriction period is to keep in their charge the appropriate controlling devices, before granting permission for any of the following operations to be undertaken:

- a. Person aloft.
- b. Dressing ship.
- c. Embarkation, disembarkation and handling of explosives.
- d. Fuelling and arming aircraft.
- e. Embarkation and disembarkation of all types of fuel and inflammable stores.

They are also to ensure that appropriate safety measures are taken two or more ships are in close proximity, e.g. when replenishing or berthed alongside each other, they are not to give permission for any of the operations enumerated above to be undertaken until they have been assured that appropriate precautions have been taken in the ship, or ships, close aboard in accordance with the current regulations.

8. Safety precautions in connection with radio hazards are laid down in BRd 2924, *RF Hazards in the Naval Service*, CB 4986, Addendum to BRd 2924 and current Defence Instructions and Notices (DINs).

9. **Embarkation, Disembarkation and Handling of Explosives.** The general responsibilities of officers and the precautions required for weapons are laid down in JSP 862, *MOD Maritime Explosive Regulations - Surface Ships & Submarines*, and current DINs.

10. **Fuelling and Arming Aircraft.** The responsibilities of officers and the precautions required are laid down in DBR 1754, *Regulations for the Safe Storage and Handling of Petroleum Products in HM Ships and Submarines*, or JSP 862 and current DINs.

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11. **Embarkation and Disembarkation of Fuel and Flammable Stores.** The Marine Engineer Officer is generally responsible for these operations; the precautions required are laid down in DBR 1754.

12. **Radio Transmission in an Emergency.** If it is essential to carry out radio transmissions on normally restricted transmitters during the handling of explosives and/or flammables, work is to be suspended and all handling is to cease.

13. **Rotating Aerials.** When damage to a rotating aerial might be caused by rotation into, for example, the jib of a crane, the 'Safe to rotate' and/or 'Person aloft' controlling devices are to be placed in the custody of the Officer of the Watch who is not to release them until they are satisfied that there is no danger of the aerial sweeping into any obstruction. The Officer of the Watch is also to ensure that rotating aerials are so trained as to obviate danger of damage by contact with obstructions alongside if the ship should develop a list.

14. **Aircraft Radio.** In addition to the relevant instructions contained in the books quoted above, certain special instructions concerning the operation of aircraft radio transmitters on the flight deck and in hangars are given in AP (N) 140, *Naval Aircraft Maintenance Manual*.

15. **Lightning.** In view of the possibility of being struck by lightning or of induced discharge from metallic structures due to a close lightning discharge, strict precautions should be taken in the event of a thunderstorm and all loading or unloading of explosives or handling of flammable stores is to cease from the time the first thunderclap is heard until the storm has passed. Hoisting whips are to be removed at least six feet from explosives or flammable stores.

16. **Divers.** Before granting permission for diving operations to be carried out on the ship's hull the Officer of the Watch is to ensure that all safety precautions relating to the ship's propellers, intakes and sonars are taken. They are to check that similar precautions in ships alongside, or in the vicinity in the case of high powered sonars, have also been taken.

3003. Responsibilities at Sea

1. **Taking Charge and Handing over the Watch.** On every occasion before taking charge of a watch at sea, the Officer of the Watch is to see that the ship is in her correct station, or position, on a Submarine this will include fixing the ship before proceeding to the bridge.

2. After taking charge of the watch they are not, until properly relieved, to leave the primary conning position except when the Commanding Officer directs that they may carry out their duties at another position. They are to see that every necessary precaution is taken to prevent accident and, in war, that the ship is as perfectly prepared for battle as circumstances permit (*but see 1901 and 1902* when a Principal Warfare Officer is closed up and the ship is controlled from the operations room).

3. On giving up charge of the watch they are to be careful to inform their relief of all the orders, whether conveyed by signal or otherwise, which remain unexecuted. If in company with other ships they are to point out the position of the officer in tactical command of the unit, of the guide or guides of the ships generally. They are to inform their relief what power is available and, generally, to give them all information that may serve to enable them to keep station and out of danger.

4. **Responsibilities in Relation to the Commanding Officer.**

a. All the duties and responsibilities of the Officer of the Watch at sea referred to in this section remain with them wherever the Commanding Officer may be, unless they are relieved of all or any of them by specific order of the Commanding Officer.

b. The normal method of transfer of responsibility for handling the ship shall be by the Commanding Officer using the formal phrase 'I have the ship'. However the Commanding Officer will also be deemed to have relieved the Officer of the Watch of their responsibility for charge of the ship if they give a direct wheel or telegraph order, or if additionally in a submarine they give a direct hydroplane, main ballast blow or ship system order normally given by the Officer of the Watch.

c. In either of the above circumstances the relieving of the Officer of the Watch of their responsibility for charge of the ship shall be deemed to have relieved them of their responsibilities for her safety from collision or grounding under [Para 3001](#). The responsibilities of the Officer of the Watch in other matters remain with them and they should also dictate the circumstances in which the Navigating Officer may relieve the Officer of the Watch and assume the latter's responsibilities (see **0803.3**).

d. When the Commanding Officer has relieved the Officer of the Watch of some or all of their duties and responsibilities under this section, the Officer of the Watch is not to resume the duties and responsibilities of which they have been relieved unless and until the Commanding Officer specifically orders them to do so. Before giving such an order, the Commanding Officer is to be satisfied that the Officer of the Watch is ready and able to resume those duties and responsibilities.

e. If at any time they feel that they have or are likely to receive insufficient information on which to discharge those duties fully, the Officer of the Watch must inform the Commanding Officer without delay.

5. **General Conduct of the Ship.** At all times when at sea, as far as is practicable, they are to keep themselves informed of the position of the ship. They are to be careful that the ship is properly steered, and that a complete account of her movements is kept in the *Ship's Log and Navigational Record Book* (Form S.3034) by noting navigational information in sufficient detail for the track of the ship at any time to be reconstructed accurately. During periods of manoeuvring, when entering or leaving harbour, or at any other time when it is considered prudent, they are to see that a record of wheel and engine orders is made in the *Wheel and Engine Orders Record Book* (Form S.580) (see also BR 45(4)). Alternatively, an electronic audio record is to be kept.

6. When approaching land, or in pilotage waters, they are to ascertain whether land, navigational marks or lights are in sight; if not, whether they are likely to be seen; and all other particulars which may be of use in keeping the ship out of danger. They are to ascertain the Commanding Officer's instructions regarding the use of radar (consulting the Principal Warfare Officer when the ship is controlled from the operations room) and other navigational aids, as well as the taking of soundings and the clearing away of anchors and cables. When soundings are being taken, they are to see that they are obtained with sufficient frequency.

BRd 2

7. They are to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the international regulations for preventing collisions at sea, set out in BR 453 *International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea*, which are on all occasions, and particularly in fog, to be very carefully observed.

8. They are to alter course and speed as required to maintain station, to carry out the evasive steering plan in force, to act as the Commanding Officer may direct upon initial contact with the enemy or as the Principal Warfare Officer may direct when the ship is controlled from the operations room, and to avoid immediate danger. On all other occasions they are to obtain the Commanding Officer's directions before altering course or speed.

9. When in company, they are to be extremely careful to keep station with other ships, and is to report at once to the Commanding Officer if unable to do so. They are to inform the Commanding Officer of all changes of formation, course or speed, including changes of course and speed by the guide of the unit, or an adjacent ship, but not including alterations of course in accordance with the evasive steering plan in force and small alterations made without signal for the purpose of keeping station (see Clause 12).

10. They are to inform the Commanding Officer, or cause them to be informed, of all strange vessels or objects seen; of all signals of which, in their opinion or in accordance with the Commanding Officer's orders, they should be made immediately aware and, in general, of all occurrences worthy of notice (see Clause 12).

11. **Responsibilities in Relation to the Officer in Charge of the Operations Room.** In discharging their responsibilities for the safety of the ship, the Officer of the Watch is to take account of the advice of the Officer in Charge of the Operations Room, who may have better information available to them than the Officer of the Watch. The Officer of the Watch must not hesitate to seek information or clarification from the Officer in Charge of the Operations Room as necessary. The Officer of the Watch must appreciate that in a complex situation the Officer in Charge of the Operations Room will also be involved in the tactical situation. Notwithstanding this, all the duties and responsibilities of the Officer of the Watch at sea remain applicable irrespective of the relative seniorities of the Officer of the Watch and the Officer in Charge of the Operations Room. The Officer of the Watch has, under the Commanding Officer, final responsibility for the safety of the ship and may therefore accept or reject advice or instructions given by the Officer in Charge of the Operations Room. In any difference of opinion as to the action to be taken the Commanding Officer must, if time permits, be informed.

12. **Responsibility of the Officer of the Watch When the Ship is Controlled from the Operations Room.** In conducting operations from the operations room the Commanding Officer, or as delegated by them the Principal Warfare Officer, should control the ship by passing instructions to the Officer of the Watch. The Officer of the Watch has authority to query, modify or delay or veto any instruction, which appears likely to lead to a dangerous situation. Additionally the Officer of the Watch should always report circumstances that may not be appreciated by those in the operations room, and should always be prepared to take any action that may be necessary. Should in exceptional circumstances the Commanding Officer con the ship from the operations room, the Officer of the Watch is responsible for informing the Commanding Officer immediately should they see a potentially dangerous situation arising. The ship is never to be conned by the Principal Warfare Officer from the operations room unless directed to do so by the Commanding Officer when at shelter stations.

These regulations apply to a surfaced submarine where the control room equates to the operations room. The reports required by Clause 9 and 10 are, after the information has been exchanged between the Principal Warfare Officer and the Officer of the Watch when necessary, to be made by the Principal Warfare Officer.

13. In MCM vessels fitted with Joystick (PJC) and/or AIO (NAUTIS/CAAIS) controls in the Operations Room, the Commanding Officer is authorised to con the Ship from the Operations Room in PJC or AIO control. The OOW is responsible for informing the Commanding Officer immediately should they see a potentially dangerous situation arising. The Commanding Officer is also authorised to delegate the con to the Mine Warfare Officer (MWO) in the Operations Room in PJC or AIO control. Under such circumstances when in AIO control the bridge NAUTIS/CAAIS console is to display the MCM track plan: when in PJC control the MWO is to keep the OOW fully informed of intended movements. When the ship is being conned by the MWO, the OOW remains responsible for the safety of the ship. If the OOW considers the ship to be standing into danger when being conned by the MWO, the OOW is to revert to bridge control and take over the con until the danger is past.

14. **Responsibilities in Relation to the Officer or Rating in Charge of the Control Room in a Submarine.** In a submarine on the surface, the officer or rating in charge of the control room watch is the equivalent of the Officer in Charge of the Operations Room. In a dived submarine the Tactical Officer of the Watch is the equivalent of the Officer in Charge of the Operations Room: this duty will normally be combined with that of the Officer of the Watch.

15. **Routine Duties.** The Officer of the Watch is to ensure that the necessary orders are given for carrying out the routine duties of the ship. In war they may be relieved of this responsibility at the discretion of the Commanding Officer.

16. **Signals and Lights.** The OOW is to take care that a good look-out is kept for all signals; that no unauthorized visual or sound signals are made; that, between the hours of sunset and sunrise, the authorized navigation lights are displayed; that no lights are visible from outboard which might cause the authorised lights of the ship to be obscured or mistaken; and, when the ship is darkened, that no unauthorized lights are visible from outboard.

17. **Look-out Personnel.** Both by day and by night the OOW is to station look-out personnel in accordance with the Commanding Officer's orders; they are to ensure that they are at their proper stations and know their duties; they are frequently to caution them to be on the alert; they are to take care at all times to have them relieved sufficiently frequently.

18. **Seaboats.** The state of seaboats will be briefed once a day to the Officer of the Watch. When they take charge of the watch they are to satisfy themselves that the seaboats are ready for lowering, manning is correct and that the boats are correctly rigged and equipped for the prevailing circumstances. At any time the OOW may think necessary, they are to cause the watch and the seaboats' crew to be mustered.

19. **Boat Safety.** The Officer of the Watch is to pay particular attention to safety in boats (BRd 0067 *Admiralty Manual of Seamanship* Art 05118 and BRd 9467 *FLAGOs* Chap 8 refer) and is to be consulted before all transfers at sea and in harbour. They are to ensure that:

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- a. The Coxswain briefs all passengers on safety requirements including the control of movement around the boat, the correct rig appropriate to the prevailing weather and sea conditions and the procedures for maintaining personal safety in the boat in rough weather.
- b. The correct lifesaving equipment is worn according to the prevailing conditions.
- c. Particular attention is paid to the safety of boat navigation with routes briefed and dangers/speed limits identified. All onboard navigation aids are to be employed.
- d. The Coxswain is aware of the weather forecast and that boats are not overloaded.

20. **Safety of Personnel on Upper Deck.** the OOW is responsible that orders are given to prevent any person going on to the weather decks when sea conditions or alterations of course or speed are likely to make it dangerous. Should it be necessary for personnel to go on the weather decks in dangerous conditions they are to ensure that orders are given to them to use upper deck lifelines, safety harnesses and to wear hazardous duty lifejackets at all times. The Officer of the Watch is also responsible for ensuring all personnel are subsequently clear of the upper deck on completion of the evolution (See *also* **0903.6**).

21. **Fishing Vessel Log.** They are carefully to comply with the instructions contained in the *Fishing Vessel Log* (Form S.1176) so far as they relate to them.

3004. Responsibilities in Harbour

1. **Taking Charge and Handing over the Watch.** On every occasion before taking charge of a watch in harbour the OOW is to obtain the following information from the officer they are relieving:

- a. The anchor bearings, if the ship is at anchor.
- b. The anchor or anchors down, if the ship is at anchor, and the amount of cable veered on each anchor.
- c. The number of boats lowered and any boats which are away from the ship.
- d. The routine in force.
- e. The positions of any flagship in company and of the ship of the senior officer of the squadron or division to which the ship is attached.
- f. Any orders, whether conveyed by signal or otherwise, which remains unexecuted.
- g. The machinery state.
- h. The Damage Control state and condition in force. After taking charge of the watch they are to be constantly on deck until properly relieved. On giving up charge of the watch the OOW is to be careful to turn over to their relief all relevant information in regard to their watch and that of their relief.

2. **General Responsibilities.** The OOW is responsible for the outward appearance of the ship, the orderly conduct of all on board, the safety and appearance of all boats working under their orders and ensuring that the proper marks of respect are paid to passing vessels and officers visiting the ship (see Chapter 3 and **9201**). They are to ensure, both in the course of their rounds and otherwise, that all possible steps are taken to minimize the risk of fire.
3. They are to see that the routine duties are carried out on deck and that the regulating staff carry out the instructions laid down in Chapter 34.
4. They are to keep a good look-out on the weather, and if the weather or the visibility deteriorates they are to inform the Commanding Officer or the senior officer on board and are to take such precautions as may be necessary for the safety of the ship, her boats and her equipments.
5. The OOW is responsible for ensuring that brows, gangways and ladders are kept rigged in a way which permits their safe use in all states of weather and tide. They are also to ensure that a lifebuoy, a lifeline and a short-range buoy-light are provided near the Quartermaster's position in case of accident.
6. **Signals and Lights.** They are to take care that a good look-out is kept for all signals; that no unauthorized signals are made; that, between the hours of sunset and sunrise, the authorized anchor lights are displayed; and when the ship is darkened, that no unauthorized lights are visible from outboard. When colours are lowered before or after sunset the anchor lights are to be switched on at sunset. Unless specially ordered by the senior officer present, masthead obstruction lights are to be burned only when it is clear that the ship's masts constitute a hazard to aircraft operating in the vicinity.
7. **Boat Safety.** The Officer of the Watch is to pay particular attention to safety in boats in accordance with **Para 3003 sub para 19**.
8. **Inspection of Firearms.** They are to inspect all small arms, sporting guns and other weapons brought over the gangway to ensure that they are not loaded. (See **3621**—Private firearms.)
9. **Foul Hawse.** When the ship is moored, should the hawse become foul the OOW is immediately to report to the Commanding Officer and cause the Navigating Officer to be informed as well.

3005. Authority

1. The authority of the OOW is laid down in **0338**. In ships in harbour and in shore establishments the duties and authority of the OOW may at the Commanding Officer's discretion be delegated to an Officer of the Day.
2. The OOW has functional authority over all personnel as described in **0338** in fulfilling their tasks.

SECTION II - THE OOW IN (DIVED) SUBMARINES

3006. General

1. All references to the 'OOW' within this section will be assumed to refer to the OOW (Dived). The following articles supplement the instructions to OOWs contained above.

3007. Purpose and Accountability

1. The OOW (Dived) is the Commanding Officer's representative in the Control Room, in which capacity, their purpose and accountability is in accordance with **Para 3001 [sub para 1](#)** and **[sub para 2](#)**.

2. In a dived submarine, the senior officer on watch having all qualifications required by the Fleet Commander (BRd 9468 *FLAGOs (Submarines)*), and authority delegated to them by their Commanding Officer, is designated the Officer of the Watch. Additionally the Fleet Commander is to lay down the minimum qualification and specific tasks for OOD, Ship Control OOW and Watch Navigator (2nd OOW) in BRd 9468.

3008. Tasks and Responsibilities

1. **Accountability.** The OOW is accountable to the Commanding Officer for the safety and readiness of the ship as follows:

- a. The safety of the submarine and her company in all aspects, except when relieved of that responsibility (see 0803.1)
- b. The safe, efficient and effective control of the submarine.
- c. The direction of all sensors and their operators to optimise search, detection, classification and tracking.
- d. The direction of the command system to ensure the accurate, comprehensive and timely processing, evaluation and display of target data.

2. **Supervision of Subordinates.** When an unqualified officer or rating is carrying out any of the duties listed below (**Para 3008 [sub para 3](#)–[sub para 6](#)**) the OOW is personally accountable for the detailed execution of the task. When a qualified officer or rating is closed up the OOW remains accountable for the overall execution of the task and so should exercise a degree of supervision commensurate with the experience of the subordinate. The OOW should draw attention to potentially dangerous situations early and should be stationed where their experience and expertise are most required.

3. **Ship Control.** The Ship Control OOW derive their authority from the OOW and is subordinate to the OOW. They must hold all qualifications required by the Fleet Commander (BRd 9468). They are accountable to the OOW for:

- a. Control of routine 'ship control' functions such as maintaining the submarine's trim.

- b. Running the ship's routine.
 - c. Initiating the emergency action required to counter any ship control incident or damage which may hazard the safety of the submarine.
4. **Tactical Picture Supervisor (TPS).** The TPS is to be closed up to assist the OOW; they derive their authority from the OOW and are subordinate to the OOW. They must hold all qualifications required by the Fleet Commander (BRd 9468). They are accountable to the OOW for the direction of the combat system to ensure the accurate, comprehensive and timely processing, evaluation and display of target data
5. **Watch Navigator.** In a dived submarine it is normal that the responsibility for the execution of navigation be delegated by the Navigating Officer to the OOW (see **1925**). In some circumstances the OOW may be assisted in the execution of navigation by another officer, the watch navigator (sometimes referred to as the 2nd OOW). In this circumstance the watch navigator is to be proficient in those navigation techniques required by the Fleet Commander (BRd 9468). The OOW retains accountability for the navigational safety of the vessel at all times, except when relieved of those responsibilities (see **0803**) or when subject to specific instructions for SSBN OOWs and must supervise the watch navigator accordingly.
6. **Periscope Watchkeeper.** Submarine qualified officers may undertake periscope watchkeeping duties if they are warfare officers. Non-warfare officers and Senior Rates may carry out this duty if they meet the medical requirements, including eyesight standards, and hold the qualifications required by the Fleet Commander (BRd 9468). The officer having 'the look' on the periscope is accountable to the OOW for initiating the emergency action required in the event of a sighting affecting the safety of the submarine. They are also accountable for making standard shipping reports to the OOW and Commanding Officer in accordance with the Commanding Officer's standing orders/night orders.